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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 1 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. SANOUSSI (Guinea)
(Vice-President)

- Statement by the Chairman
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement by Mr. Iturralde Ballivian (Bolivia)

Address by Mr. Antall (Hungary)

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Statements made by

Mr. Al-Shara (Syrian Arab Republic)

Mr. Malmierca Peoli (Cuba)

Address by Mr. Torres Y Torres Lara (Peru)

Statement by Mr. Saguier Caballero (Paraguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I am pleased to announce that we are observing for the first time today the International Day for the Elderly. When the General Assembly decided last year, in its resolution 45/106, that the first day of October each year should be designated as International Day for the Elderly, it recognized that the elderly are an asset to society and can contribute significantly to the development process. It was conscious of the need to have a common basis and frame of reference for the protection and promotion of the rights of the elderly and to underline the importance of innovative and effective international cooperation in the field of aging.

The aging of the world's population will have a major impact on the family, on social services and on other support systems, at both the community and national levels. On this International Day for the Elderly, let us commit ourselves once again to the goals of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, and ensure that the elderly in the developing and developed countries alike are enabled to contribute fully, as a valued part of our communities, to the development of our society.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ITURRALDE BALLIVIAN (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish):

The events that have just occurred in the sister republic of Haiti fill us with a sense of anguish. Democracy in that noble country - a cradle of the ideals of freedom - has been brutally interrupted, just when it was beginning to fulfil its splendid promise after having emerged from the long night of dictatorship and illegality that so long afflicted it. I wish, from this rostrum, to associate my country with the words of condemnation at the overthrow of the democratic Government of President Aristide - an act all the more condemnable in view of the fact that that Government emerged just a few months ago as a result of free, democratic elections supervised by the United Nations. We express our complete solidarity with the democratic and progressive people of Haiti and their freely elected political authorities.

Allow me, Mr. President, to convey to you, on behalf of the Government and people of Bolivia and on my own behalf, heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

The people and Government of Bolivia also wish, through me, to express their most sincere appreciation of the noble and tireless work of the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar. His historic record will remain indelibly inscribed in the annals of the Organization.

We take pleasure in welcoming the Republic of Korea and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea into the United Nations. My delegation, likewise, extends a welcome to the Federated States of Micronesia and to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, whose membership enhances the universal

(Mr. Iturralde Ballivian,
Bolivia)

character of the United Nations. Further, we wish to place on record our satisfaction at the admission of the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The principles of peace, freedom, democracy, justice, solidarity, respect for human rights, and economic and social well-being clearly set the stage on which mankind's future must unfold. Nor must we forget that to achieve real and permanent peace we must resolve all conflicts and possible causes of conflict, thus fostering the trust between States that allows a climate of understanding to prevail. This was proclaimed by the Heads of State and Government at the recent Ibero-American summit in Guadalajara, where it was observed that, owing to recent trends in the peaceful settlement of disputes, we could envisage important progress towards resolution of the various regional conflicts that persist on our continent.

Intimately related to peace, we believe, is the imperative need to solve increasingly urgent economic and social problems that beset the majority of nations represented here. We cannot demand that the principles and tenets of the Charter prevail if the poorest, who constitute the majority of mankind, are not afforded better opportunities, and if their right to a dignified and stable existence is not respected.

In that spirit, at the recent Ibero-American summit in Guadalajara, President Paz Zamora of Bolivia proposed that the technology required to satisfy basic needs should become the universal heritage of mankind, within the reach of all.

Allow me now, very briefly, to refer to the process of economic adjustment in my country, which has had international repercussions.

(Mr. Iturralde Ballivian,
Bolivia)

These years have been a severe trial - years in which the Bolivian people have demonstrated discipline and abnegation in order to fulfil rigorous plans of austerity and collective effort. This process has consolidated the stability of our currency. It has permitted a reduction of the budget deficit by 25 per cent to 3.5 per cent, the amortization of public debt, the maintenance of confidence by the people, and the growth of the gross domestic product by an estimated 3.5 per cent. Inflation was brought down from 25,000 per cent in 1985 to 17 per cent last year, and it is estimated that the figure will be 15 per cent this year.

At the same time, a series of measures adopted as part of the policy of free trade and the encouragement of foreign investment and, above all, the climate of public confidence shown by the return of national capital for new investments or in the form of bank deposits allow us to glimpse a future of brighter hopes and full recovery. It is in that spirit, and with the moral encouragement of a job well begun, that we have achieved a substantial reduction in bilateral debt in the case of several countries, including the United States within the framework of President Bush's Americas initiative.

While introducing a strict programme of macroeconomic adjustment, which made these results possible, my country, consistent with its sense of public duty, has not neglected the social sector. It has introduced, among other measures, the fund for social investment - a novel approach, which has elicited the interest of other countries, and with respect to which we reiterate our willingness to share.

We also have the fullest confidence that, as part of this new international current of encouragement for each country's efforts, and with

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the old patterns of pseudo-paternalism that marred the ideal of cooperation on an equal footing now behind us, we shall see the elimination of the protectionist measures that industrialized countries tend to apply to free trade, hampering efforts and disappointing the expectations placed in the principles of free trade and their more correct application.

(Mr. Iturralde Ballivian,
Bolivia)

The Government of Bolivia wishes on this occasion most especially to underscore the relevant role played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Latin America and the Caribbean. With regard to my country, UNDP activities take on special importance as they constitute a cornerstone for development plans in various fields.

A matter of vital importance to my country is the reintegration of Bolivia to the coast of the Pacific Ocean, a permanent and indispensable feature of its foreign policy responding to a deeply rooted national conviction. Its unresolved status is a serious obstacle to the development and integration of this part of the world and runs counter to understanding among democratic regimes. This position of Bolivia has been repeatedly explained in international forums, particularly in the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and has received support and solidarity from numerous peoples and nations.

We are by vocation and conviction a peace-loving country. It could not be further from our thoughts even to imagine solutions which are not those of constructive dialogue in order to seek avenues of compromise and mutual interest, in keeping with the peaceful solution which, in conformity with the mandate of the United Nations Charter, is binding upon all of us. Moreover, affirming the need for preventive diplomacy, as has been pointed out by several speakers at this rostrum, would be the very means to identify and diagnose this type of problem.

The Government of Bolivia has made known its decision to seek a solution to this problem by means of negotiation and for that purpose has consistently proposed to the Government of Chile that an open and constructive dialogue be

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established. How could it be otherwise? We are joyfully witnessing the victory of negotiation, which, with each passing day, is bringing us closer to solving problems which only yesterday appeared insoluble. Consequently, we will continue to insist on the need for dialogue and on the faith that inspires us in the search for a just solution in keeping with American brotherhood.

The climate of détente allows us to harbour the hope that dialogue and negotiation will prevail and peace and democracy will be definitively consolidated in the sister Republic of El Salvador. We welcome with satisfaction the result of the process of peacemaking in which we acknowledge the invaluable role played by the Organization and in particular by the Secretary-General.

I wish to refer to other topics of great importance. The international community is aware that much remains to be done in order to defeat the scourge of drug trafficking. My country has contributed substantially to this struggle. The concept of alternative development, which means replacing the coca economy by a diversified, internationally accepted alternative economy, was presented for the first time in this forum by President Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia.

Despite the efforts of Bolivians and help from various countries it is clear that programmes and mandates cannot be fulfilled without greater resources. The principle of collective or shared responsibility between producer and consumer States must be emphasized in this respect. Therefore, we have the obligation to add our voice to the continuing appeal for a prompt and effective increase of financial and technical resources, in order

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adequately to carry out existing programmes nationally, regionally and world wide.

The question of the environment is receiving particular attention from my Government. This position has been expressed in all international forums and concrete initiatives have been put forward which favour appropriate use of our natural resources and guarantee our peoples' right to development.

The continuing search for solutions to the problems of development, together with continuous innovation in increasingly sophisticated technology, have often caused us to lose sight of the need to set in motion mechanisms of interrelationship between the environment and development based essentially on strategies that consolidate sustained economic growth.

With the same ecumenical vision that the international community wishes to take in looking to the future and ridding the Earth's inhabitable space of the blight of environmental neglect with which we have lived until now, the President of Bolivia has declared an environmental moratorium of five years beginning in 1990 throughout the country's territory.

We are therefore looking forward with great expectations to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, where important and far-reaching agreements on this question will no doubt be arrived at.

This is also a good time to recall that, at the Guadalajara summit meeting, President Paz Zamora proposed the creation of an Ibero-American fund for the development of indigenous peoples, with a view to resolving the pressing problems of those original peoples without resort to "Indian reservations", or paternalistic compensation.

(Mr. Iturralde Ballivian,
Bolivia)

With the easing of international tensions which, among other harmful effects, led us to a runaway arms race, we should harbour the hope that this Assembly will initiate a genuine process of disarmament in order to benefit the real development priorities of our countries. Bolivia lends its most resolute support to that effort.

Several initiatives have taken shape with a view to revitalizing our Organization. Some have been comprehensive in scope. Others have been more moderate, seeking to give it an orientation which, without affecting the principles or functioning of the Charter, would make its procedures more functional.

Bolivia, as a member of the Río Group of Consultation, took an active part in the Group's deliberations on the revitalization of the organs of the United Nations system and joined the consensus on the document which was submitted to the Secretary-General. We wish to reiterate our support for the conclusions set out in that document, most especially as regards strengthening the authority of the Secretary-General under the Charter, and as regards the need for appointments of senior officials in the Secretariat to be made so as to reflect the qualities of ability and efficiency of those who apply for them, rather than being the exclusive preserve of particular Members.

Political and economic events that have occurred over a short span of time continue to astonish us and call for serious thought. We are facing a new world in which the old, rigid parameters no longer apply and in which sufficient space must be provided for new realities. The peoples of our countries are telling us, in different ways, what kind of world they hope to live in, and what kind of a future they wish to bequeath to future generations.

ADDRESS BY MR. JOZSEF ANTALL, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary.

Mr. Jozsef Antall, Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, Mr. Jozsef Antall, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. ANTALL (Hungary): May I, first of all, express my sincere congratulations to you on your election as President of the United Nations General Assembly during its forty-sixth session.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome into our midst the representatives of the new Member States of the United Nations: those of the Baltic States, the two Koreas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. The presence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signals not only the growing universality of the United Nations, but also the power of people's right to self-determination, a power which is able to surmount all difficulties. The message of this power is particularly timely in today's world.

Three and a half decades have passed since the people of a small country in Central Europe stood up under the banner of freedom, independence and democracy to oppose communist dictatorship and foreign occupation; and as a last resort in their struggle, they cried out to the United Nations for help. Given the cold war confrontation at the time, the free world and the United Nations, apart from moral and political support, were unable to give effective assistance to the Hungarian revolution and fight for national freedom.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

Thirty-five years ago, Soviet tanks rolled in unhampered and triumphed over the right of the Hungarian people to self-determination.

Here and now, I must extend my gratitude to those diplomats who, in the autumn of 1956 and for years afterwards, worked so hard to make known to the world the justness of the Hungarian revolution. Those of us who tried then to provide the world Organization with information from Hungary really know what the United Nations meant at that time: it meant the only chance for the hopeful and it was a forum and a link to the free world even for the sceptics. Those who came to our aid in those difficult times deserve our most heartfelt thanks.

I believe I may say with no small measure of pride that the objectives of October 1956 have been fulfilled: Hungary has accomplished its change of system in accordance with the will of its people, expressed in free elections. My country has indeed become free, independent and democratic, and these profound changes are irreversible.

In June of this year, the last units of Soviet troops left our country. Hungary has thus regained its sovereignty, which had been practically non-existent since March 1944, and now its people can effectively exercise their right to self-determination.

For more than seven decades the world waited for the moment when communism would collapse. My Government took the initiative in the endeavours of the former communist countries to dismantle the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the military-political bloc that was completely alien to their people but upon whom it was forced. However, the fall of communism in Europe caught the democratic world unprepared. It was not ready to face the problems emerging in the region nor equipped to solve them.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

Dramatically, in addition to communism, another totalitarian system, that of fascism and national socialism, also afflicted the generations of our century. Those generations suffered from the consequences of the incapacity for action against the 1917 Bolshevik coup, from the defeatist policy following the Hitlerite takeover and from the international arrangements that followed. They suffered because, politically, there was a lack of resolve and determination, and the world had to pay dearly for this. No realpolitik of any kind can absolve a generation from observing certain fundamental political and moral norms, because otherwise - in the absence of timely action against a totalitarian system - millions will perish. This is the lesson of the twentieth century.

Today Hungary has a functioning parliamentary democracy based on a multi-party system, organically linked to the political structure of the democratic countries of Europe and North America. As in other States founded on the rule of law, the full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in our country is guaranteed by laws and regulations, in accordance with international norms and standards.

The recent past has seen fundamental and beneficial changes in the system of international relations. The East-West division, built on ideological-military confrontation, and the age of the cold war have come to an end.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

In the view of the Hungarian Government, such tried and tested European structures as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Community and the Council of Europe are among the major pillars of security and stability in Europe. These efficient organizations are attractive to peoples and nations because they provide them with effective guarantees for their security and economic and social development. Hungary lends full support to their role and mission. We welcome the endeavours of these organizations and deem it of fundamental importance to build substantive relations with the new democracies of the central and eastern European regions.

The adoption of the Charter of Paris, which was a culmination of the Helsinki process, has opened a new chapter in the life of Europe, the continent most adversely affected by the division following the Second World War, having suffered for decades from its consequences. The document, based on common Euro-Atlantic values that link the participating States, may become a genuine code of pan-European cooperation.

The promising process of a peaceful, prosperous, free and democratic Europe is seriously threatened by such conflict situations as that which we are witnessing, for instance, in Yugoslavia. There, the remnants of the communist-nationalist dictatorship, which have not yet been fully defeated, are facing the forces of democracy; the aspirations of intermingled nations for self-determination are ever more manifest; the legitimate claims of nations and minorities for autonomy are stifled; and, on top of all this, the army has shrugged off constitutional control. Conscious of the threat to the security and stability of Europe, and feeling a special sense of responsibility for the half-million Hungarians living in Yugoslavia, Hungary is following the tragic events in that country with the deepest concern.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

There is a mistaken belief among the world public that in Yugoslavia there is a cease-fire violated by sporadic incidents in towns with unknown names. In reality, however, there is a cruel, ongoing war there. There is massive mobilization, and recruits are being sent to fight untrained in a conflict in which they do not wish to take part. This mobilization was condemned by the constitutionally elected President of that country. That is why hundreds and thousands of young people of all nationalities are fleeing across the Yugoslavian borders to avoid the draft and a senseless death. The Croatian and Hungarian civilian populations are being chased from their homes. The number of refugees from Yugoslavia - beyond those who came to our country earlier from elsewhere - is already around 30,000. But only 10 per cent of that number are Hungarian nationals. Hungary has had increasing difficulties in coping with the vast amount of related human and material problems.

It is of fundamental interest to us to see that a solution in our southern neighbour's territory be achieved by political means, democratically, and in full conformity with the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. Like other participants in the Conference on Security and Co operation in Europe (CSCE), my Government supports the mediation efforts of the European Community, including the work of the peace conference in The Hague. In this connection, I deem it necessary to underscore that, in addition to the involvement of the republics of Yugoslavia, the institutional involvement of the representatives of the Albanian, Hungarian and other ethnic communities concerned, and due consideration of their legitimate aspirations, are indispensable to the settlement of the conflict. We maintain the view that only the simultaneous implementation of the right of peoples to self-determination, universal human

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

rights and the rights of national minorities can bring a lasting solution to the crisis in Yugoslavia.

We welcome United Nations Security Council resolution 713 (1991), which describes the crisis in Yugoslavia as constituting a threat to international peace and security; voices concern over the consequences of the conflict for the countries of the region, in particular in the border areas of neighbouring countries; recalls that no territorial changes within Yugoslavia brought about by violence are acceptable; and fully supports the efforts for peace of the European Community under the auspices of the CSCE.

We are convinced that the international community and all those who take an active part in the search for peace in Yugoslavia should draw the appropriate conclusions from the state of affairs caused by the brutal use of force, and should base their behaviour on the reality of the situation. It is of universal interest that the crises and tensions in Europe be settled as soon as possible and that a united and consolidated Europe emerge as a stabilizing force for the adjoining regions and beyond. In this process, the United Nations will also face great challenges in the coming years.

Looking beyond Europe, we can generally observe the continuation of the positive processes and changes already under way. The bipolar world has become a multipolar one. The end of the cold war has made it possible for questions of regional conflict, which had been a field of sharp confrontation and rivalry, to become elements of cooperation between the great Powers. These developments open up more favourable prospects for political solutions to the destabilizing regional conflicts.

Paradoxically, the beginning of the new era is marked by the creation of a vast coalition of nations in connection with a war - the war in the Gulf.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

We consider that the unprecedented concerted international action aimed at upholding international law during the Gulf crisis was the first practical, post-cold war manifestation of cooperation based on global partnership. We look upon the experience of that war as both a milestone and a precedent in respect to the conflict management possibilities and involvement of the United Nations. It was actually the first time since the establishment of the world Organization that the observance of the principles guiding inter-State relations was enforced by all necessary means; in other words, that the hitherto nominal function of the United Nations system of collective security was put into practice.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

In this context, we, as a member of the family of democratic nations, are proud of having made a contribution - small in scope, but in conformity with our modest possibilities - to the victory of the allied forces which liberated occupied Kuwait.

We are convinced that the sanctions against Iraq should be maintained so long as the Iraqi Government fails to comply fully with all its obligations under the resolutions of the Security Council.

A specific consequence of the Gulf war is that it has created more favourable conditions for a negotiated settlement of the decades-old conflict in the Middle East. We are hopeful that on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and as a result of modifications occurring in the positions and attitudes of the parties concerned, the obstacles to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be removed. For our part, we support resolutely the idea of convening a Middle East peace conference and the concurrent beginning of direct talks between the parties concerned in the conflict.

The principle of the self-determination of peoples cannot be applied selectively. Peace in the Middle East can be brought about, inter alia, on the basis of that principle. It is urgent, therefore, that the General Assembly revoke its resolution on Zionism adopted in 1975. Zionism is the Jewish people's philosophy of self-determination and the establishment of their own State. The resolution to which I have referred thus calls into question those fundamental rights of the Jewish people.

With the ideas of freedom and democracy gaining more and more ground, human rights and the rights of minorities are increasingly finding their legitimate place in relations between States at the end of the twentieth century. Accordingly, the priorities of Hungarian foreign policy include the

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

international protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with the unequivocal accountability of States for their voluntarily assumed obligations, irrespective of where violations of these rights and freedoms occur. This policy is inseparably linked with efforts to promote joint international action for the effective protection of the rights of national minorities.

Along with other democratic States, we resolutely maintain the view that violations of human rights and minority rights cannot be considered as an exclusively internal affair of the country concerned. Most recently, the United Nations has achieved notable results in favourably influencing the attitude of Governments that have rejected the lawful call for international scrutiny. It is regrettable, however, that the principle that the United Nations proceeds legitimately in ensuring respect for human rights has not yet gained universal acceptance. In our view, Governments should see a helping hand, rather than an accusing finger, in such actions by the United Nations. In line with those same considerations, we support the holding of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 in Berlin.

For seven decades now, one third of all Hungarians, several million of them - one of the largest national minorities in Europe - have been living beyond the borders of our country. In keeping with its international commitments, the Hungarian Government devotes special attention to the fate of Hungarians and all other minorities, and to their enjoyment of human and minority rights. We support and press for giving the international community a role to play in the realization of those rights. Therefore, in cases of violations of these rights, we shall not hesitate to seek assistance in international forums, in addition to our bilateral relations, to establish responsibility and redress violations of human rights.

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

In the prevailing international situation, which is transitional in many respects but is basically of a favourable character, the world Organization is now for the first time since it was established in a position to live up in practice to the principles and purposes enshrined in its Charter. The results and successes recently achieved in the maintenance of international peace and security have earned the United Nations the growing confidence of the international community and have created a stronger demand that the world Organization increase its involvement and activities. The outstanding role of the outgoing Secretary-General is duly recognized, and I wish to express to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar the sincere and well-earned appreciation of my Government for a decade of activity.

The changes in international politics have created a new situation for the United Nations. The present structure of the Organization is still a reflection of the world as it developed after the Second World War. Today, it must meet new challenges and must face new tasks, which calls for a reform of the world Organization and for its adaptation to the changing circumstances. The power of the United Nations is only as great as the power Member States are willing to assign it. However, Member States, and the major Powers among them, should lend the United Nations the proper amount of power, so that the Organization can have not only rights, but also the capacity to enforce them. The world Organization has never had to bear such responsibilities and it has never had as possibilities as great as those it has now in the wake of the disintegration of the bipolar world.

We welcome as a new manifestation of the sense of responsibility of the major Powers the concrete and bold initiative announced the other day by President George Bush of the United States, on a significant reduction in his country's nuclear arsenal. It is also promising that a similar will has been

(Mr. Antall, Hungary)

indicated on the part of the Soviet leadership. We believe that such measures are clear signs of the advance of a new and more secure world and that the other nuclear Powers will follow suit.

In the decades surrounding the turn of the century, the United Nations will unquestionably have to play a greater role than ever before. It will have to face such global challenges as the conversion of military industry to meet peaceful demands, the reduction of the shocking differences in economic development, the population explosion, the degradation of the natural environment, the world-wide enforcement of human rights, and other important issues.

The United Nations can contribute effectively to the solution of all these global challenges only if it develops into an up to-date, dynamic, flexible and potent organization. The Hungarian Government will support with all the means at its disposal this steady process of change.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jozsef Antall, Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. AL-SHARA (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, particularly as your brotherly country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and mine, Syria, share ties of common history and kinship.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of what your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, achieved in guiding the work of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We wish his friendly country, Malta, progress and prosperity.

It gives me great pleasure to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our appreciation of the efforts he has been making for the establishment of peace and security in the world and the promotion of the principles and objectives of the United Nations.

Syria welcomes the admission of both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. We are confident of their positive contribution in achieving and consolidating international cooperation and security, as well as progress and prosperity for the friendly people of Korea. In view of the Syrian Arab Republic's belief in the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of every people freely to choose their political system, Syria welcomes the admission of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia to our international Organization.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian
Arab Republic)

The major international developments which commenced in the mid-1980s have reached their pinnacle in recent months, thus opening a new chapter in contemporary political history. Although it is too early to make categorical judgements on the reasons underlying these developments and their far-reaching effects, it is clear that the main driving force behind them is the ascendance of peoples' desire to regain their freedom and independence and exercise the right to self-determination.

In this context, the world has witnessed radical changes in the States of eastern Europe. Germany has restored its unity and the three Baltic States have declared their independence. Change still continues in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia.

If tensions arise and acts of violence whose motivation are not related to national feelings or the right to the self-determination of peoples occur, they are in reality an expression of frustration and disappointment resulting from the failure to realize the aspirations of the peoples concerned, particularly with regard to their standard of living.

The lessons that can be gleaned at a national level from the outcome of these major changes is that freedom and bread are two basic needs for both individuals and society. They are indivisible; neither can be sacrificed for the sake of the other. The balance between bread and freedom constitutes the foundation of the balance between man's material and spiritual needs and the pillar of social peace.

On the international level, the most significant lesson is that people's right to self-determination is a driving force that cannot be curbed, that foreign occupation is bound to fail and has to be brought to an end and that the principles of international law and international legality cannot be

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

ignored or dealt with through the adoption of double standards. Only on the basis of these firm principles can world peace be established.

Syria, which is an important part of a nation, authentic in its history and civilization, and which has for decades been facing continuous occupation and aggression, finds in these new international changes a historic opportunity to rectify those situations in our region that have gone awry, to clarify facts that have been distorted, to restore land that has been occupied, rights that have been usurped, and to participate in establishing a just and comprehensive peace in this region.

Israel has exploited the years of the cold war, and indeed encouraged it, to obtain the most enormous military and economic assistance in the history of international relations, under the pretext that it is the guardian of Western interests in the face of the Soviet tide and Communist infiltration in the Middle East. The programme of United States aid to Israel alone has exceeded the total value of the Marshall Plan for the whole of Europe. In contrast, the Arabs reaped nothing from the successive waves of the cold war - in which they had no say - but more Israeli occupation of their land and the establishment of Jewish settlements on that land, without any international deterrence.

The United Nations resolution equating zionism with racism was adopted as a result of Israeli occupation of Arab territories and Israel's continuing persecution of, and discrimination against, Arabs in all walks of life. The call for repealing the resolution requires, a priori, eliminating the substantive causes which prompted the United Nations to adopt it - that is, terminating the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and enabling the Palestinian people to enjoy their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

Throughout their long history, the Arabs never indulged in any kind of racial discrimination against any ethnic or religious minority which lived among them. For hundreds of years, Jews lived among Muslim Arabs during which time they never experienced any form of ethnic, racial or religious discrimination or oppression. On the contrary, they lived in grace and dignity to the extent that when the Arabs left Spain in the fifteenth century the Jews chose to leave together with the Arabs because they did not enjoy security or equality outside the Arab environment. The question that persistently poses itself is this: Whereas the Arabs treated the Jews throughout history with such complete tolerance, does the world register how much the Arabs have endured in racial discrimination and oppression during Israel's short history?

In spite of all this, the Arabs want peace, along with all nations of the world. What the Arabs want is the implementation of United Nations resolutions, no more and no less. However, the rulers in Israel resist peace efforts with all the power and influence they can muster here and there. Instead of abiding by the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations to which they owe their very existence, they cling to a futile ideology based on expansion and the uprooting of Arabs, and thus sow the seeds of hatred and bloodshed in the region.

It is a strange paradox that Israel should demand that the United States finance the building of the new settlements in the occupied Arab territories while at the same time it claims that it wants peace. Peace and the usurpation of the land of other peoples land cannot coexist. There is no doubt that this paradox will become clearer when the American taxpayer in particular discovers the reality of what the Israeli occupation has caused:

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

about half a million Syrians uprooted from the cities of the Golan, people which to date have been unable to return to their homes; and a quarter of a million Palestinian refugees in Syria. Added to this, over 2 million Palestinians who continue to live in the diaspora and are denied the right to return to their homes and properties in which their fathers and forebears lived uninterruptedly for centuries. The question we have to ask is this: Is it fair to continue to ignore the right of return to those uprooted Arabs while large waves of Jewish immigrants continuously push to take their place and settle in a land that neither their fathers nor grandfathers ever lived in at any point in time? Does not this paradox simply reveal that double standards are being adopted? Worse still, does not this paradox encapsulate racist concepts negating the rights of the Arab individual?

The major obstacle in the way of the peace process at this point does not simply stem from Israeli preconditions vis-à-vis Palestinian representation and occupied Arab Al Quds for attending the peace process. Rather, it stems from Israel's narrow vision of the post-cold-war and post-Gulf-war era. Syria believes, together with the Arabs and the international community, that the post-cold-war and the post-Gulf-War era have opened the door to peace and offered an historic opportunity to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on international legality, resolutions of the United Nations, and the right of peoples to self-determination. As for Israel, it is sparing no effort in closing every door that may lead to peace. It is intensifying the building of settlements. Thus, it exploits the open door to intensive Soviet Jewish emigration, on the one hand, and the deep wound inflicted on the Arab nation by the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, on the other.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

The official opening of a new settlement in the occupied territories by the head of the Israeli Government last week and his statement that the building of settlements will extend to the far horizon are unequivocal proof of Israel's intentions to sabotage peace efforts.

We in Syria, under the leadership of President Hafez Al-Assad, are determined to engage in the battle for peace until the end. There will be no retreat from our stand, no compromise on our lands and rights. Our demands are legitimate and are supported by international law and by United Nations resolutions. Our cause is just and is supported by both our people and the international community at large.

Lebanon's restoration of its national unity, constitutional institutions and a large degree of its security and normal life is a source of great satisfaction to the international community, in general, and to my country, Syria, in particular.

Until recently, many prominent world politicians had believed that Lebanon, which had been engulfed in chaos, strife and bloodshed for the past 16 years, was a hopeless case to the extent that the word "Lebanization" in the political dictionary began to be applied to any intractable situation that faced any large or small country in the world.

The cooperation of my country with Lebanon, with which we enjoy bonds of kinship, history and common destiny, was a crucial factor that helped brotherly Lebanon recover from its plight, restore its sovereignty and integrity and resume its role in the Arab and international arenas.

What Lebanon now needs is resolute support by the world community that would, on the one hand, implement Security Council resolution 425 (1973), calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from southern Lebanon and, on the other, contribute to Lebanon's reconstruction and rehabilitation.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

As for the situation in Afghanistan, we believe that national reconciliation encompassing all Afghan parties would be the most favourable way to reach a solution acceptable to all sides in the conflict. In this context, we welcome the efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in accordance with the latest General Assembly resolution, the proposals of the Secretary-General and the recent joint Soviet-United States declaration.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

With respect to the question of Cyprus, Syria, which enjoys historic ties of friendship with this neighbouring country, supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and the peace initiatives aimed at convening an international conference to be attended by all parties concerned in order to work out a solution to the Cyprus question, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, which would safeguard the unity of Cyprus, its independence, territorial integrity and the interests of all its citizens.

With respect to the situation in South Africa, the achievements made to date still fall short of the objectives to which the people of South Africa aspire. That is why the world community is called upon to continue exerting pressure on the Pretoria regime until all manifestations of apartheid are abolished, and the people of South Africa are enabled to exercise their right to self-determination.

The peoples of the world place great hopes in the United Nations, especially after the recent international developments and the end of the cold war. It is the hope of these peoples that the end of the cold war signifies the end of the paralysis that afflicted our international Organization.

We, in Syria, believe that the United Nations, with its Charter and principles, is a guarantor of international peace and security and of putting a definitive end to occupation and aggression. We also expect that the new international order to be just must express the aspirations of our peoples and must be established in the context of the United Nations, in accordance with its principles and Charter. We hope for a better tomorrow in which all the peoples of the world will enjoy freedom, justice, prosperity and peace.

Mr. MALMIERCA PEOLI (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): We are extremely happy to welcome the admission to membership of the United Nations at this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly the sister Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with which we share this moment of well-deserved jubilation; the Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, to which we express again our desire to maintain our ties of friendship and collaboration with their emergence as independent countries; and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Korea, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

We congratulate Ambassador Samir Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session and we assure him that our delegation will cooperate fully with him with a view to ensuring the success of his important work.

Today's world hardly resembles yesterday's world. The global imbalance of forces in favour of hegemonism that led to a unipolar world aroused the concern of many countries - and not only the small and underdeveloped ones. There has been a rather fat file in the past few years on the use of force as a way of solving international conflicts. The so-called end of the cold war; the process of harmonization and cooperation between East and West; the collapse of socialism in Eastern and Central Europe; the structural crisis in the Soviet Union, which today is discussing what its future will look like; the fashioning of a single military super-Power, the United States - all this paints a very dangerous picture that greatly disturbs the poor and underdeveloped countries of the South. Yet we have to examine the complexities of this new reality in depth, without fear, realizing that over the long term there is no force in the world that can crush the desire for freedom and independence of any people, however small it may be. History is

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

made by the peoples; it is not simply written down on the maps at military headquarters.

It is true that the world has changed. But what has changed for the hundreds of millions of persons living in a state of dire poverty? In 1990 alone, 14 million children died of hunger, cold, and diseases that were curable. What has changed for the wretched economies of most of the countries of the third world, which are in debt and starving, living in a state of permanent crisis and subjected to the tortures of unequal terms of trade and the cruel pieties of the powerful?

We can be happy about the end of the East-West confrontation because it removes the danger of nuclear holocaust. But the East wants to become the North, and the South is still the South. The contradictions between the developed North and the underdeveloped South are increasing. Hence, we must ask ourselves: what can the poor people expect from this agreement between the powerful? That is the reality we must face.

At their recent Ministerial Conference held in Accra, the capital of Ghana, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries reaffirmed their decision to continue the struggle to ensure the realization of their original principles, and they stated that the problems of underdevelopment and poverty are among the major factors that can threaten peace and security. They added that without peace it is impossible to struggle for development, and without the development of the peoples of the developing countries of the world it is impossible even to conceive of honourable and real peace - peace for everyone. That is the peace that our people want - a worthy, real, honourable peace that will enable us to work for our development.*

* Mr. Sanoussi (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

The United Nations must prepare itself to carry out, in these new conditions of the world today, the role set for it by its founders. Thus, it must go through a process of democratization in all of its bodies, particularly those which, under the powers conferred on them by virtue of the Charter, have a greater role to play in carrying out some of the purposes that led to the establishment of the Organization. Such is the case with the Security Council, which is governed by the anachronistic and dangerous veto power, which is an obstacle to the supreme functions of the General Assembly and which thereby makes a mockery of the will of the majority of the international community.

This process should apply to the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, given the very important role that the Organization has to play in the restructuring and changing of the current system of international economic relations, replacing them by a just and fair system.

It is necessary to revitalize the Secretariat and the intergovernmental mechanisms in the economic and social spheres, so that they may really be able to contribute to the socio-economic development of the developing countries through international cooperation. They would thereby be carrying out one of the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Moreover, we must work together to strengthen and revitalize the Economic and Social Council. A strengthened Council, with universal membership, would be better able to take up the new challenges that the pressing needs of the developing countries present, not only to the United Nations but to all of the bodies and agencies that are part of its system.

The United Nations must contribute in a definite way to the solution of several conflicts that are still weighing on the conscience of mankind.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

The Palestinian people are still crying out for the right to exercise their inalienable rights and to achieve an independent life as a sovereign State in Palestine. Cuba believes that the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, is still the only real option that the international community has.

We welcome the progress made by the South African national liberation movement in its struggle to eradicate apartheid and achieve a majority government, a non-racial and democratic government, based on the principle of "one man, one vote".

Similarly, we support the talks which, through the good offices of the Secretary-General, have been going on between the FMLN and the Government of El Salvador to find a real, lasting, peaceful solution to the tragedy of that brother people, without any outside interference or pressure. The agreement recently concluded in New York was an example of what can be accomplished through such talks.

We would urge that by the year 2000 the process of decolonization be completed. It was begun just after the Second World War, with the accession to independence of all non-self-governing countries, and we would now welcome the accession to self-determination and independence of all, including our sister island of Puerto Rico, which is Latin American and Caribbean.

We support the Secretary-General's efforts to implement the United Nations agreements aimed at achieving a final solution to the conflicts in Cambodia and Afghanistan and the effective decolonization of Western Sahara.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

We are encouraged here by the growing awareness of the need for unity and integration among the peoples of the third world. One great example of this was the recently concluded first Ibero-American summit conference in Guadalajara, Mexico. That was the first meeting in the history of those peoples that was convened and held apart from the will of the United States.

We would like to repeat here before the General Assembly what we said in the Security Council to the effect that the people of Yugoslavia must themselves, without foreign interference, settle the differences that they have, and they must thereby achieve lasting peace, ensuring the united and non-aligned nature of their country.

We must condemn the latest military coup in Haiti, which is seeking to reverse the democratic process which, only seven months ago, brought Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the presidency. The people of Haiti, the first in Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve independence, will triumph over their enemies.

Traditionally, when we have spoken from this rostrum we have focused on analysing the international situation and we have often referred to the situation in my own country. On this occasion we wish to speak about Cuba, for recent international events and the continuation of the aggressive, hysterical campaign by the United States Administration against Cuba oblige us to do so.

The expectations after the initial euphoria that some felt over the collapse of the socialist model as it was applied in Eastern Europe are growing daily - in particular, the expectations about this small but gigantic bastion of socialism that is called Cuba. So now, what is going to happen to Cuba? Enemies and friends of the Cuban revolution are asking this question. To disabuse the former, and as the latter are well aware, let us say to the

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Assembly that the Cuban revolution was not just the result of a little Christmas present. It did not come to Havana on a tank manned by foreigners: it came on war transportation which had been seized by our fighters from the enemies of the people. It was the culmination of a long process, 100 years of struggle, by our people for our freedom and independence.

The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly has on its agenda an item dealing with the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, and so we feel it our duty to offer the Assembly some background information about that blockade and to describe to members some of its consequences.

The historical background of the blockade has to be sought in the promulgation on 17 May 1959 of the law on agrarian reform. That law helped 250,000 rural families, but it affected North American interests, who owned most of the land in our country. So immediately the United States Government began its policy of pressure, using its privileged economic relations to try to blackmail our people. In February of 1962 the United States Government decided on a total trade embargo on Cuba, prohibiting the importing of products of Cuban origin and of all products from or through Cuba, and in 1964 it banned the supply of food and medicine, thus making it a total blockade. It has been estimated that the damage done to our economy over the 30 years of this blockade amounted to over \$15 billion worth of resources.

Unfortunately - although no well-informed person would be surprised by this - the result is that after listening to many persons speak here, who for various reasons support an end to the blockade against Cuba, since they consider it to be an anachronism and immoral, the North Americans decreed -

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even after this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly had begun - new provisions which go so far they make its coercive action against Cuba almost irrational.

Arbitrary economic limits have been imposed, first of all on United States companies involved in procedures and transportation that make it possible for Cubans who live on United States territory to meet with family members who live in Cuba. In the last few years, Cuba has established systematic and unequivocal measures to facilitate such meetings, and the North American Administration has taken a very hypocritical stand regarding them and has unleashed the vilest calumny. Yet now it is the United States that is using fallacious arguments virtually to cancel such meetings. This is a totalitarian and abusive action of State intervention and simply does not take into account the damaging consequences that it will have from the humanitarian standpoint.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

In his statement to the General Assembly in 1960, President Fidel Castro stated that at the beginning of this century:

"After two years of military occupation of our country, something unexpected occurred. Just when the Cuban people, through a Constituent Assembly, were drafting the basic law of the Republic, another act was passed by the United States Congress, an act proposed by Senator Platt, of unhappy memory for Cuba, in which it was laid down that a rider was to be attached to the Cuban Constitution whereby the United States Government would be granted the right to intervene in Cuban political affairs and, in addition, the right to lease certain parts of Cuban territory for naval bases or coaling stations." (Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Plenary Meetings, 872nd Meeting, para. 67).

Years later, after a long struggle by the Cuban people, the Platt Amendment was repealed, but the naval base at Guantanamo, which resulted from it during the North American military occupation of Cuba, is still on our territory. It is an affront to the national dignity of the Cuban people, and we have repeatedly demanded that the land illegally occupied in Cuba be returned to it.

Cuba's name has been mentioned several times during the general debate at this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In his far from brilliant début as the supreme leader of the fate and actions of all the peoples on Earth, the North American President, who had promised representatives a different kind of speech, indulged in his usual anti-Cuban litany. Once again, he assumed the role of interpreter of the feelings of the Cuban people, giving free rein to this sick obsession with us. Nevertheless, it must be

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admitted that, despite all his raving, this setting is a little more appropriate than the golf courses from which he usually pronounces judgements on major international events.

In his verdict - whose content is closely akin to the intolerance and ridicule of a neo-McCarthyism that is as far-reaching as the Inquisition was - the President of the United States condemned my country's social system, insulted our Government and offended our entire people. This is the new imperial Olympians' view of the new era of harmony and concord they want us to enter.

It is incredible that in these times and here in the United Nations those who are directly responsible for the existence in the world today of the most inhuman system of exploitation and plunder, which has plunged almost 100 nations into conditions of abject poverty never before experienced by mankind, should dare to preach sermons and lecture to us on democracy and human and political rights. It is incredible that those who want to make a crusade out of democracy have for years based their policies on force, threats, pressure and blackmail, have destabilized so many nations and States, have imposed dirty wars on them, have tried to bring them to their knees by hunger or economic violence, or have simply invaded them.

It is incredible that they are trying to sell us violence, exploitation, brutality and crime as a model for society. Those that defend the so-called intrinsic good of the market-economy system forget that almost all the underdeveloped countries are using that model and that for most of their peoples this has meant infinite wretchedness, unemployment, lack of health care, hunger, illiteracy, marginalization and the most horrible social scourges. They forget also that within this opulent North American society more than 33 million human beings, most of them black and Hispanic, are living

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in abject poverty; that millions of children are abandoned, abused or subjected to violence; that more and more old people are defenceless. They forget that this is the society with the highest crime rate in the world; that this is now the world centre for organizing that evil drug-trafficking chain which has become a virtual supra-national business; and that this is the major consumer of cocaine, heroin, crack and marijuana in the world.

Perhaps it is because our people know these facts that they so solidly, strongly and resolutely support our political system, our Government and our revolution.

The aim is to deny our people the right to live and work under the social system they have chosen through free and sovereign decisions such as the referendum in which 98 per cent of the Cuban people voted by secret ballot when our socialist Constitution was submitted to our population.

Even under the conditions of underdevelopment from which we started, and even though for over 30 years we have been subjected to all kinds of aggression - the most brutal and inhuman form being the economic and trade blockade, which was designed to suffocate us - Cuba has had extraordinary success in the economic, political, social, scientific and cultural areas. Let me mention a few of our achievements: equality in a society in which all have equal rights and opportunities; safety; stability; social coexistence on a broad popular base; and forms of participatory democracy that are very strong and innovative. We can indeed say that ours is a society of solidarity and justice. Ethical and moral principles prevail and national dignity is an irreversible principle. Hence, we have a very deep spirit of internationalism, as is evident from the fact that we send thousands of doctors, technicians and teachers to work without pay in more than 30 countries of the third world.

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In our country, the main social services, such as health, education and culture, are free. One hundred per cent of our people are entitled to social security. Income is distributed fairly and equitably and there is no exploitation or abuse. That is why we do not have children who are abandoned, who are beggars; we do not have old people who are defenceless; we do not have people who are marginalized. We have never encouraged consumerism. Our country has established an impressive social, health, education and production infrastructure. We can state that as a result of our revolution the people of Cuba have achieved a standard of living comparable to that of many developed countries - but in our country there are far fewer cases of violence, delinquency and crime and we do not produce, distribute or use drugs.

The United Nations Development Programme and such bodies as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund which study the main social indicators at the international level have pointed out the indisputable fact that in these indicators Cuba is at a level similar to that of most developed countries, and on an even higher level than some of them. Some vital indicators, of transcendental social importance - such as infant mortality, mortality of children under the age of five, maternal mortality, life expectancy at birth, the number of people going to school, the number of people that stay in school, literacy, the number of doctors and teachers per capita, income distribution, caloric intake, and many others - are the result of the efforts made by a society whose primary objective is to ensure the well-being of its people.

We, of course, respect everyone's political beliefs and freedom of choice, but Cuba has not experienced such respect on the part of others.

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Until 1959 this system, which is so dogmatically being pushed today as the only possible formula, imposed on the Cuban people the most dreadful economic backwardness, a lack of basic individual and social rights and total neo-colonial dependency, poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and bloodthirsty tyranny - all of which enjoyed the consent and approval of the United States - in Cuba was synonymous with underdeveloped and dependent capitalism. And now we are being asked to return to that situation in the name of being up to date - just because the historical experiment in the old socialist States of Europe has failed - and in the same triumphant manner as the feudal lords returned to their old palaces after reinstatement.

The Cuban Revolution, which was won in spite of the blockade and the hostility against it, can no doubt be improved, as can any human undertaking. However, it is the closest we have come in our history towards achieving social justice and national dignity.

We will never abandon it. We will improve it ourselves. The overwhelming majority of Cubans will do so despite the cynical arrogance of the President of a country whose wealth is derived from plunder and oppression.

One of our dearest aspirations is to ensure greater popular and democratic participation in adopting all the vital decisions and in consolidating our social co-existence which is unprecedented in Cuba's history because it is founded on justice and equity. These aspirations reflect our true national consensus, which we would be able to achieve more speedily were it not for the 30 years of economic blockade, hostile actions, efforts made to isolate and condemn us unjustly before the international community and for all kinds of pressures and a permanent threat of military aggression.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

There are other references to Cuba that can be ignored. Having already commented upon the point of view behind the American broadsides, I do not believe that I should take up the Assembly's time to exercise the right of reply to a statement, hastily and awkwardly translated into Spanish, based on the Yankee arguments against Cuba which, unfortunately, were read out in Spanish from this very rostrum.

My delegation, however, would like to state for the record that we have great respect, among other well-known statesmen and colleagues, for the President of Venezuela, Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, owing to his unquestioned courage and his consistent approach when in addressing the Assembly he spoke of his approach in the search for an end to the confrontation between the United States and Cuba.

It is no secret that, in addition to sharing views with Venezuela, there are also differing political views between us. But this does not prevent us from having a useful and constructive relationship with such an important country in our region.

We can distinguish between those who call for changes but merely want the example of Cuba to disappear and those who are genuinely concerned about the future of our country.

To the fraternal President of Venezuela, we say that Cuba is always willing to consider its differences with the United States without preconditions of any type, on the basis of equality and mutual respect, even apart from the fact that one cannot equate Cuba - a besieged, harassed and blockaded country that is being asked to change - with the United States, the most powerful country in the world.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

As members know, the President of the Soviet Union recently stated unilaterally that he was willing to withdraw what he called the Soviet Armed Forces Training Brigade from our country.

Since our people chose the path to independence, in 1959, and decided to exercise its sovereign rights, we have suffered not only from threats but also from aggression of all kinds. Under those prevailing circumstances, when the then leaders of the Soviet Union suggested that missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads should be stationed in Cuba, our acceptance was motivated not only by the legitimate right to defend ourselves with arms equal to those of the countries that threatened us but also by the feeling that we would thus be contributing to strengthening the socialist camp and, in particular, the Soviet Union, at a time when the threat of imperialist aggression was becoming real and that that decision could have made it possible to avoid such an attack.

In the days of the October crisis, the Revolutionary Government, through the statement by its Prime Minister of 28 October 1962, set forth the five points that it deemed to be essential in order to guarantee genuine peace in Cuba:

"First, a halt to the economic blockade and all measures of trade and economic pressure applied by the United States in all parts of the world against our country;

Secondly, a halt to all subversive activities, the launch and landing of weapons and explosives by air and sea, the organization of invasions by mercenaries, the infiltration of spies and saboteurs - activities against us launched from the territory of the United States and of some collaborating countries;

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Thirdly, a halt to pirate-like attacks launched from existing bases in the United States and Puerto Rico;

Fourthly, a halt to all violations of our air and naval space by United States warships and aircraft;

Fifthly, withdrawal from the Guantanamo naval base, and the return of Cuban territory occupied by the United States."

As a result of that crisis, and after the unilateral decision taken by the Government of the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles from Cuba, the Governments of Cuba and the Soviet Union decided to keep a Soviet military unit on Cuban territory. The unit was symbolic, for its forces were never strong enough to defend Cuba; however, it was an expression of friendship and solidarity, given the threats from the United States.

When in 1979, after a period of 17 years, the United States, as part of its vain attempts to prevent the convening in Cuba of the Sixth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, exposed the presence in Cuba of a Motorized Brigade of the Soviet Armed Forces, the then Soviet leadership, without prior consultation with our Government, yielded to American pressure and made statements that, with the acceptance of the American authorities, in theory transformed that combat unit, which was to be activated in case of invasion from the United States, into a supposedly harmless study centre.

The presence of the Soviet military contingent in Cuba, which continued to be a combat unit, retaining all its military means and missions, would not have been necessary had we secured genuine guarantees for a lasting peace, which could have been achieved if only the demands our Government made in 1962 in the "five points" I have referred to had been acceded to - and these points retain their validity to this day. If, at least, the case for withdrawal from

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the Guantanamo naval base had been adequately made, there would be no American or Soviet troops in Cuba today.

The guarantees we called for still do not exist.

The Government of Cuba would be prepared to accept the simultaneous withdrawal from our country of the Soviet and American military personnel. In the circumstances, this would be the only equitable, just and honourable way out.

The United States has not discarded the option of a major attack against Cuba. While spokesmen of the Department of State and some officials of the Bush Administration assure us publicly and through the diplomatic channel that they have no aggressive intentions or plans vis-à-vis Cuba, the Pentagon thinks and acts quite differently.

We invite all those who believe the promises of the Bush Administration to ask their representatives what are the contingency plans behind the military exercises of the 101st Airborne Division that began on 16 December and, as scheduled by the Pentagon, will continue until 16 October?

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For 35 days, in Fort Chafee, Arkansas, the so-called Screeching Eagles will participate in a low-intensity-conflict scenario, which will gradually escalate to a medium-intensity level, in a place of dense vegetation, against an enemy that uses tactics similar to those of the Soviets. Where does the Pentagon think that such conditions might exist, if not in Cuba?

The peace that we want is real peace - a peace of dignity, a peace that will be for all States, large and small, weak and powerful.

Speaking from this rostrum 31 years ago, President Fidel Castro said:

"When we small countries seek to be free, we know that we must become free by our own efforts and at our own risk. When a people is united and is defending a just cause, it can trust in its own strength. In Cuba we are not, as we have been alleged to be, a group of men governing a country. We are a people governing a country, an entire nation resolutely united in an unshakeable revolutionary spirit in defence of its rights. This is something that the enemies of the revolution and of Cuba should know for if they ignore it they are grievously mistaken."

(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Plenary Meetings, 872nd meeting, para. 132)

On that occasion President Castro said also:

"With all due respect to this Organization, I must say that our people, the people of Cuba, have learned much; they are, and I say this with pride, equal to the task they are undertaking, to the heroic struggle they are waging; they have learnt a lesson from recent international events and they know that at the eleventh hour, when their rights have been denied, when the forces of aggression are marshalled against them, when their rights are not protected either in the Organization of

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American States or in the United Nations, there still remains to them the ultimate and heroic remedy of resistance." (ibid., para. 131)

This has been our position of principle. It has been stated and it has been applied over the past 38 years. This traditional policy has been fully supported by our people. With their weapons in their hands, they are willing to defend our independence, our freedom, our right to have the social system that we want, the system that suits our needs and our interests.

The defence of our revolution has been based on the principle of the involvement of all the people. It has been based on the involvement of all our citizens in the defence of our country, on their being part of our armed forces, our people's militias, because they are absolutely convinced that any enemy daring to invade our country will not find an absence of resistance anywhere, will have not a moment without struggle, not a moment's respite, until the enemy has left our country. No enemy will ever be able to crush or corrupt us. Our people - the authors of the Cuban revolution - have proclaimed a thousand times that they will continue our work because they know that our battle is part of the struggle for true independence, freedom and development for all peoples. We shall hold high the flag of socialism, which our country defends. We shall defend our nationality. We shall continue to hold our socialist principles - socialism or death; our country or death - because we know that we shall triumph.

ADDRESS BY MR. CARLOS TORRES Y TORRES LARA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE
REPUBLIC OF PERU

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, Prime Minister of the Republic of Peru,
was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru, Mr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. TORRES y TORRES LARA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): At a stage of unprecedented significance for the international system, I should like to congratulate Mr. Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. The renaissance of the United Nations is a stimulating challenge that we must undertake in a creative spirit if we are to enter the twenty-first century with a world body capable of responding efficiently to the increasing demands of today's world.

A clear symptom of the period of transformation that we are experiencing is the incorporation of States whose membership of this Organization would have seemed inconceivable only a few years ago. The admission of the Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia represents the rescue, affirmation and historic reparation of the principle of peoples' right to self-determination. The full membership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of the Republic of Korea symbolizes the removal of the anachronism of the ideological factor in international relations, as well as recognition of the need to face issues from a practical perspective by

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overcoming traditional confrontations. Likewise, the admission of the Marshall Islands and of the Federated States of Micronesia reaffirms the universal character of our Organization.

Seldom in recent history have mankind's opportunities consciously to build its future been affirmed so clearly. The irrelevance of ideology in international affairs has offered a wide margin of freedom to create, to innovate, to establish principles and criteria that reflect the concerns and needs of all peoples. At the same time, however, it has sown the seeds of great uncertainty.

There has been an increasing concentration of power on a worldwide scale, with the possibility of its consolidation as a unipolar system.

The globalization of the international economy constitutes a parallel stream, which calls into question the narrowness of productive forces restricted to national contexts. This calls for a reshaping of commercial blocs and a restructuring of economies, based on regional criteria. Thus, the interrelationships of political, economic and social factors in the international community are today more evident than ever.

In this context, the North-South relationship becomes all the more complex with the emergence of global issues, such as narco-terrorism, the sustainable protection of the environment, human rights, and other issues that, by their very nature, demand a more imaginative approach.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

At such a complex juncture what is the role of the United Nations? We face an international climate of an unprecedented nature which provides us with the opportunity to shape our own future. The United Nations, as the highest forum of the system and as the only truly universal body, must play an essential role in the management of the international system at this time of great fluidity. To this end, it is imperative to maintain the balance among its organs and to strengthen the political role of the Secretary-General, in order to avert a monopoly in the handling of multilateral affairs as a result of the concentration of power within the Security Council.

One of the clearest signs of the need for the United Nations to adapt to the new international reality is the intense practice of dialogue and consensus. Towards this objective, my country, and Latin America at large, are willing actively to participate in the strengthening of diplomacy and the operative restructuring of the United Nations, by enhancing our own regional mechanisms for agreement.

In the same vein Peru hopes to contribute to making the Non-Aligned Movement a key protagonist in the dialogue with developed countries in order to define a new model of international relationships taking into account the just aspirations of all members.

In this new context my country welcomes the steps taken by the Secretary-General which have helped the people of El Salvador to envisage a peaceful future after long years of suffering. The action of the United Nations has also enabled the people of Western Sahara to decide on their own future and has opened a promising path to the definitive solution of the Cambodian conflict.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

We cannot lose sight of the fact that the impressive changes to which we have referred have taken place against a backdrop characterized by the persistence of, and in many cases the worsening of, poverty levels in vast sectors of the world population. The redefinition of international cooperation for development must, therefore, be the new central item on the multilateral agenda.

It is thus indispensable to elaborate a broader approach to such cooperation, placing special emphasis on countries that, like those in Latin America, are now engaged in a sustainable development process based upon their own efforts.

International cooperation should be the expression of the commitment of the international community to create an economic international climate conducive to development. It must, therefore, not be conceived as an exercise in paternalism or charity.

To the degree that international security is today determined by elements beyond considerations of a mere military and strategic nature, these affect the internal stability of States and are closely related to social and economic challenges. Therefore, they should become decisive factors in the magnitude of the flow of international cooperation.

It must also be noted that the existence of highly destabilizing factors in emerging democracies, such as terrorism and drug trafficking, make it necessary to re-examine the social concepts which have guided the action of the United Nations.

This new approach must assess whether action taken in the social field has, to some degree, laid the foundations for the political stability of States, particularly the developing countries.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

For this reason and with the same keen interest and dedication currently applied to negotiations on global issues, a new and enhanced approach to social issues must be taken within the United Nations. Peru considers this to be one of the key elements in the process of renewal that now inspires the work of the United Nations.

In order to attain this objective, Peru considers one of the most appropriate possibilities to be the convening of a world summit for social development and this goal must be reached through substantive work, the main characteristic of which must be the frank and open exchange of views based on realities rather than on purely academic considerations.

Today's multilateral agenda encompasses a new set of problems generically called "global issues", that includes questions that link the developed world with the developing countries.

Therefore, and in order to make the handling of these issues truly effective, it is necessary to include the developmental component in whatever international commitments are undertaken. In this manner, a new North-South dialogue, characterized by agreement rather than by confrontation, can be achieved. Such a dialogue must be based on the following three guidelines: first, the dialogue must be fundamentally of a social and economic nature; secondly, the development variable must be included in this new generation of international issues, such as the environment, narco-terrorism and the growth of a dynamic entrepreneurship for a free, just and equitable economy; and, thirdly, the new international agenda must react to those initiatives that stem from civil society as well as from governments.

Interdependence has produced an increasing indivisibility between the internal affairs of countries and their external environment. Peru is perhaps

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

a model case of such a relationship. My country has made and continues to make enormous efforts to develop a new relationship with the international system.

After one year of implementing a rational economic programme and the launching of a plan of structural reform designed to adapt the country to new world realities in the midst of hardships accumulated over a long period, democracy has reaffirmed itself in my country. We have successfully controlled hyper-inflation, we have started again to meet our financial obligations and have been readmitted into the international financial community. We are committed to limiting and eliminating non-productive spending. We have visibly improved the human rights situation, and have intensified our frontal attack against drug trafficking.

The most serious questions on the agenda of this session of the Assembly are present in Peru. For this reason Peru can be considered as a characteristic and special case in the new international cooperation which should be promoted by the United Nations system.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

The Peruvian people, with an exemplary spirit of sacrifice, has set in action a process of national renovation that should deserve the recognition and support of the international community. I wish to acknowledge here the generous cooperation received during the first year President Fujimori's administration. We are confident that this cooperation will be expanded and deepened, especially in the coming two years, as this will be crucial for the consolidation of the Peruvian economic programme.

This represents the culmination of a long process in which international cooperation has played a fundamental role. A support group, composed of the United States, Japan, Canada and European and Latin American countries and providing generous cooperation, has recently been established. They are giving their generous assistance to enable my country to raise the necessary funds to meet our arrears to multilateral financial institutions. The normalization of our relations with these institutions has facilitated the reintegration of Peru into the international financial community.

My Government has also endeavoured to establish a new investment policy with a law which ensures secure and favoured treatment for foreign capital. Likewise, it has laid down norms to facilitate the admission of foreigners who wish to channel capital to Peru. Furthermore, a law on private investment in public enterprises, aimed at achieving an effective alliance between the public and the private sectors, has been adopted.

The results of our economic policy must also be tolerable for society. The people of Peru are not poor, they have become impoverished. This is a people that has been consistently hard-working and historically master of its own destiny. Peruvians do not deserve a bleak future of continual adversity; this is why we urgently need tangible achievements in the social sphere.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

Therefore, in honouring the strong commitment made at the World Summit for Children in September, 1990, Peru was the first country to put forward a comprehensive plan in favour of the child, and it is now time to implement that plan. This is why the participation of the international community is indispensable. It is our hope that we will be granted, on the basis of our own efforts, specific resources to complement the measures now being taken by the Government of Peru to protect the future of our children.

The criminal action of drug trafficking associated with terrorism has had profound and adverse effects on my country. To deal successfully with this situation, the President of Peru, in October, 1990, made public an initiative which includes an integrated policy of drug control and coca substitution.

Traditionally, as a part of the Andean way of life, the coca leaf has been cultivated in Peru. However, nowadays its production has been distorted by the external stimulus of the indiscriminate international consumption of one of its derivatives, cocaine. This is an objective fact that clearly confirms that the Peruvian peasants engaged in the cultivation of coca cannot, under any circumstances, be considered as drug traffickers. Moreover, differentiating them from traffickers might provide the key for a comprehensive treatment of the problem.

Today, 60 per cent of the coca leaf is produced in Peru and 80 per cent of the illegal production of cocaine is consumed in the United States. Therefore, the understanding that exists between the Governments of the United States and Peru on cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking is of crucial importance to Peru, to the United States and to the international community at large. The Government of Peru, together with the international community, has the most resolute political will to eradicate drug trafficking.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

In this context, on 14 May 1991, the Governments of Peru and of the United States signed an agreement on drug control and on alternative development policy. This document contains essential elements for the Peruvian policy on drugs, such as the recognition by both parties of the failure of the exclusively repressive measures hitherto employed, and of the causal relationship between consumption and production of drugs.

Regarding the innovative role the United Nations must play in this field, Peru offers its resolute support to the new international drug control programme of action and commends Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli on his work as head of the programme.

The issue of the environment is also one of high priority to the Peruvian Government. We are confident that the international community will reach balanced agreements to prevent the preservation of the environment from becoming a new conditionality for the development of our countries. This requires innovative efforts in the field of international cooperation in order to make available additional financial resources and to ensure the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to the developing world on preferential and non-commercial terms.

In this effort, a country's sovereign right to manage its own natural resources should be upheld, as should the principle that those who most contribute to environmental degradation should be held most responsible. The mechanisms which may be devised should include debt relief schemes.

Another serious problem Peru is confronting is that of terrorism. My country suffers from the scourge of one of the most cruel terrorist groups in the world. Their criminal actions over the past 11 years have meant the loss of more than 22,000 human lives and have resulted in economic losses equivalent to 90 per cent of our GDP.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

Democracy in Peru, by free election and encompassing all political parties and ideologies, is prevailing and will prevail over the scourge of terrorism financed by drug trafficking. We are acting transparently, openly and legally, in order to enforce human rights effectively and fully in the midst of the conflict with the democratic system and against fundamental freedoms which terrorism initiated more than a decade ago.

This is what is really happening in Peru. For us it is essential that Governments, the United Nations, private organizations and everyone committed to the defence of human rights assist us in telling the world and explaining to it that terrorism is the main source of violence.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

We cannot tolerate the persistence of unbalanced, distorted and even conspiratorial information that tries to justify the criminal actions of terrorism against our people, our society and its institutions.

The Government of Peru has noticeably improved the situation of human rights through practical measures that are transparent and legal. It is convinced that the fight against violence must be carried out with respect for human rights, for that is precisely the foundation of the legitimacy of its actions against the crimes perpetrated by narco-terrorists and violent groups that consider human rights bourgeois rights that should be eliminated.

My country has established the Council for Peace in order to ensure the strict observance of human rights, complementing it with a legislative decree authorizing criminal prosecutors in zones declared to be in a state of emergency to enter police and military compounds and any other place of detention in order to verify the situation of persons under arrest and of those reported as missing.

As I have previously pointed out, international security in the post-cold-war era is inextricably associated with the need for a new approach to socioeconomic matters. Without greater progress in this field, international security will continue to be seriously threatened.

In the same vein, President Fujimori, at the First Ibero-American summit, held in Mexico in July 1991, proposed an initiative for regional disarmament based upon the renunciation of the use of arms of mass destruction and the utilization of the resources thus made available to promote economic and social development in Latin America.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

The peace-loving attitude Peru is reflected in its permanent commitment to regional disarmament as an effective measure for general and complete disarmament; in its active participation within the framework of negotiations, currently being carried out in Geneva, for the establishment of an international convention on chemical weapons; in its reaffirmation of the terms of the international convention on bacteriological weapons; in its role as promoter of the initiative for a complete ban on nuclear testing; and in our peace-loving efforts to make the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty an effective instrument for cooperation and universal understanding.

The President of Ecuador, Mr. Rodrigo Borja, during his address delivered yesterday, 30 September 1991, stated that Ecuador has an unsolved territorial problem with Peru which endangers peace in the region. He has proposed the arbitration of His Holiness Pope John Paul II as a means of resolution. In this regard, with all due respect and admiration for His Holiness, we find ourselves in the imperative need to firmly put forward two rectifications:

Firstly, the President of Ecuador has attempted to ignore in his statement the very existence of the Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Boundaries of Rio de Janeiro of 1942, which definitively settled the boundary problem existing between Ecuador and Peru. Ecuador cannot disavow this treaty, duly signed, approved by the respective congresses, and ratified by both countries, under the solemn guarantee of four other American Republics that also signed it as guarantors: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States of America.

Hence, there is no territorial problem between Peru and Ecuador. It was settled half a century ago by a treaty between the two countries and with the guarantee of four American republics.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

The second rectification is designed to alert the international community to the Ecuadorian attempt to move into a different context a matter that should be solved through the contractual mechanisms of the Protocol of Rio de Janeiro of 1942, thereby trying to distort the nature of this bilateral question by internationalizing it. In fact, according to Article VII of the above-mentioned treaty, which definitively established the borders between Peru and Ecuador, any disagreement or doubt regarding its application must be solved by the parties with the participation of the guarantor countries of the treaty: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States of America.

Circumventing this mechanism by trying to invoke the worthy, respectable intervention of His Holiness John Paul II has the sole objective, the hidden purpose, of disavowing an international treaty, signed by the Governments of both countries, approved by their respective congresses and ratified according to international law, under the guarantee of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States of America, who signed this treaty in said capacity of guarantors. If this attempt were to be accepted, no international treaty would be able to stand, since the basic principle of respect for international treaties would be ignored, thus tearing apart the international legal structure so painstakingly built over the years on the basis of peaceful coexistence. This would endanger continental and world security.

The inviolability of borders and the respect for international treaties are principles without which it would not have been possible, for example, to build the new Europe or to consolidate peace between Iraq and Kuwait, which is based upon the undeniable legal foundations of United Nations Security Council resolution 687 of 3 April 1991.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

For these reasons, from this highest of international forums we call upon our sister Republic of Ecuador and demand that she fit her deeds to her declarations of peace, justice and respect for law by submitting any disagreement or doubt on the implementation of the Peruvian-Ecuadorian Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Boundaries of 29 January 1942, or on the verdict of the Brazilian arbitrator Braz Dias de Aguiar, to the guarantor countries of said treaty, for it is they, as guarantors with the authority to do so, not us, who must resolve these questions, in accordance with Articles V and VII of the above-mentioned Protocol.

It is not Peru, therefore, that is avoiding a peaceful and immediate solution to the alleged territorial problem. It is Ecuador that refuses to resort to the final say of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States of America, countries that have repeatedly offered to fulfil their commitment as guarantors of the Protocol, as they have recently affirmed in their declaration issued in Brasilia on 15 September 1991.

The existence of a fully applicable legal instrument makes improper the appeal to His Holiness for arbitration, whose moral authority is beyond any doubt, as are the profound religious sentiments of the peoples of Peru and Ecuador.

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

In the present context, with the restoration of the validity of international peace and security, the peoples of Peru and Ecuador expect a great deal from their Governments' capacity for agreement and cooperation, with a view to projecting harmoniously into the future the profound historical, geographical, social and cultural roots that link them and that should turn them into a powerful integrating nucleus at the core of the Andean community, which will be indispensable if Latin America is to fashion itself into a true zone of peace.

That is why the proposal made yesterday by the President of Ecuador for the establishment of a zone of peace in South America is fully consistent with the initiative which was launched by President Alberto Fujimori on 18 July last at the first Ibero-American summit, in Guadalajara, and which, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, I hope to implement by inviting my colleagues of the Rio Group to sign in Lima in the near future a declaration renouncing weapons of mass destruction in Latin America and to start consultations aimed at consolidating peace, security and development in the region.

Under the guidance of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations system has emerged from its longest period of stagnation and inertia. It has attained a higher level of efficiency, and the redefinition of its role has given it unusual momentum. The optimism that has resulted from this is not baseless; indeed, it is based on new and encouraging prospects for shared work and collective action.

As a Peruvian and a Latin American, I am proud of the eminent role played by my distinguished fellow countrymen in this age of unprecedented achievements. The recent institutional adjustments which I have already

(Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Peru)

mentioned and those in the international system itself cannot be viewed in isolation from the discretion, constancy and imagination of Mr. Perez de Cuellar's historic administration. I am certain this recognition is shared by the international community at large.

The contemporary world confronts present generations with a qualitatively different challenge. This is an era in which mankind will have to prove its capacity to manage the planet in an equitable manner. This vast challenge is not a consequence of war but a creative consensual act. It is therefore necessary to secure a renewed role for the United Nations, which should become the fundamental agent in the promotion of international cooperation for development, because it is the only institution capable of managing this complex historic transition. This is true today more than ever before, because it summons the vitality and creativity of the peoples of the world, the political will of their Governments and the leadership of its Secretariat.

Peru, aware of these changes, is immersed in a sweeping process of national renewal. Its success depends on our own efforts and perseverance, but also on the international community's support and sensitivity.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Torres y Torres Lara, Prime Minister of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. SAGUIER CABALLERO (Paraguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Perhaps never before have we heard such optimistic words spoken here. Concern has been expressed for the future, of course, but faith in the future of mankind has also been expressed. There is renewed trust in this Organization

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

and in its ability to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter. The President has been entrusted with leading the General Assembly at this crucial stage in its history. His wisdom and ability ensure a fruitful session. My country congratulates him and the Secretary-General,

Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose name will be inscribed in the pages of the history of the United Nations and the history of the struggle for peace on Earth.

Hopes for lasting peace have been strengthened by the admission of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to membership of the United Nations. Paraguay is glad that the Republic of Korea has seen its dream come true of taking its seat in the Organization, as it has long wished to do. We hail and welcome the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which have now become Members in well-earned recognition of their long struggles for freedom and independence. We also welcome the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

As I have said, mankind is now experiencing an extraordinary reaffirmation of its fundamental values. Peace, respect for inalienable human rights, freedom and democracy are no longer words with no meaning for most of the countries that are now preparing to embark on the adventure of building a new world. Building a new world requires new attitudes. Let us not replace ideological confrontation by economic confrontation. It would not be worth eliminating the threat of military conflagration if the threat of death from lack of medicine and food remained.

We trust that the end of the cold war will mark the beginning of the quest for a fairer social and economic order. It has been said time and again here that peace is more than the absence of war. To ensure true and lasting peace, the underlying causes of conflict must be eliminated. The end of the

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

arms race, the relaxation of international tension and the rebirth of democracies and freedom will mean something only if they are accompanied by a firm resolve to help the most needy countries in their struggle for development. Liberalization alone will not put bread on the table of the poor. This is the time for world solidarity.

This session is taking place against the backdrop of an international atmosphere that has never before existed in our Organization. It has had an extraordinary impact on international relations. This situation made it possible to react decisively to the Persian Gulf crisis, the most serious threat to international peace and security faced in recent times by the Security Council. We believe that an important lesson has been learned from the conflict. There is an awareness of the need, on the one hand, to control and limit all kinds of weapons; and, on the other, to strengthen the ability to take preventive action in order to discourage anyone who might be tempted to have recourse to the use of force.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

This improvement in the international political climate shows that it is now possible to achieve appropriate solutions to challenges that earlier appeared out of reach; in our view, these include the conflict in Cambodia, the problem of Cyprus, Western Sahara and the Middle East, to name only the longest-standing and most serious problems.

On Cambodia, recent events in the context of the peace plan of the five permanent members of the Security Council make it possible for that country to move forward to peace, national reconciliation and the restoration of sovereignty.

We are concerned at the continuing tense situation in the Middle East. Paraguay reiterates its support for the initiatives for a peaceful negotiated solution including the right of the State of Israel to live in peace within its own borders and the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland of its own. Paraguay endorses the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and urges their implementation.

We reaffirm our support for the work of the Secretary-General that has enabled us to see the glimmer of a solution to the conflict in Western Sahara.

We voice once again our earnest hope that the good offices of the Secretary-General will lead to a solution of the Cyprus problem. The efforts of the Secretary-General and of the international community must be matched by the parties to the conflict if they are to come closer together and achieve a peaceful solution of the problem.

Progress in South Africa towards the solution of that country's political problems is a harbinger of better days ahead in that region.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

Peace in El Salvador deserves a special, deeply emotional mention. All of America welcomes the good fortune of the Salvadoran people, and is glad to see the elimination of the few remaining conflicts in the region.

Paraguay looks forward to enthusiastic participation in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference on the environment. Five hundred years after its discovery, America once again holds out the hope of a better future for mankind. My country will adopt concrete measures and will sign agreements on protection of the environment; we shall set aside a large quantity of our territory as a protected zone.

Today the notion of development is indissolubly linked with that of preserving the environment. Now is the time to create the conditions for more sustainable development. Our Government shares mankind's common desire for economic growth without destruction. Protecting the environment shows love for mankind.

We want a world without pollution, a world where nature is preserved, just as we want a drug-free society. Like the other countries of the hemisphere, Paraguay is committed to a frontal attack on drug trafficking.

One of the fundamental pillars of Paraguay's foreign policy is cooperation with, and support for, the endeavours of the various international organizations that are working to protect human rights. It is not economic or military power that lends prestige to a country; rather, it is the way in which its inhabitants enjoy to the full human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Since the morning of 3 February 1989, when President Rodriguez declared the beginning of the democratization of Paraguay and respect for human rights, my country's transitional process has been based on achieving democracy and on laying the foundations for the full enjoyment of human rights.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

A year ago in this Hall Paraguay spoke optimistically about its future. Time has proven us right. In the process of consolidating our democracy and our freedoms so much has been constantly achieved that we venture to believe that obscurantism and repression are things of the past; we look to the future with optimism. It is an undeniable fact that we are once again a part of the world of free nations; that encourages us to participate in the search for a fairer world social and economic order in which free enterprise (with a clear social component), democracy and freedom will promote sustained development with a view to ensuring a better life for our peoples.

We are pinning a large part of our hopes for development on integration. The Asuncion Treaty, which established the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), was signed in our capital on 26 March 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and my country. It reflects our common goal of achieving development through integration. I can announce today that the parliaments of these four countries have now endorsed the Asuncion Treaty; 30 days after the deposit of the instrument of ratification the Treaty will enter into force. Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay will go down in history as countries able to take up the challenge of integration in a joint effort to secure better economic and social conditions and to strengthen freedom and democracy.

MERCOSUR is not just a development strategy. It reaffirms the determination of our peoples to live in peace, cooperation and harmony. It responds to the call of history. It is the rediscovery of our political, economic, social and cultural identities.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

In the context also of international cooperation, President Bush launched the Enterprise for the Americas plan, which is aimed at fostering better understanding among American countries through trade. The spheres of development, trade, investment and debt can help us promote equitable and beneficial relationships. To that end, and as part of a new relationship with the United States, the MERCOSUR Foreign Ministers and the Government of the United States signed the Rose Garden Agreement last June in the White House garden.

MERCOSUR also has hopes for assistance and cooperation in its relations with the European Economic Community. At the Luxembourg meeting between Foreign Ministers of the European Community and the Rio Group, and at a later meeting in Brussels, foundations were laid for genuine rapprochement; there are plans for a joint cooperation agreement between MERCOSUR and the European Community.

The European Community's experience with integration, its economic and production capacity and, above all, its declared good will towards MERCOSUR augur well for a better future in our relations. For its part, Paraguay is near to signing a third-generation agreement in the context of cooperation with the Community.

Talks with Japan and other Asian countries also promise better relations between Latin America and those countries. I must not fail to highlight the traditional friendship and spirit of cooperation that links Paraguay with the Government and the people of Japan.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

In order to establish and maintain economic relations and to encourage in our country investment that stimulates development, we are negotiating agreements for the promotion and management of investments. In that context, Paraguay has entered into an agreement with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, an organ of the World Bank, to protect international investments.

The investment opportunities that Paraguay offers and the cooperation and participation of the more developed countries will help us to have a more effective presence in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR).

The new winds of democratization and the profound enthusiasm for freedom reached Latin America before they reached other parts of the world. The 1990s find America made up as never before of countries with democratically elected Governments. Integration and the spirit of continent-wide solidarity seen in the Rio Group arouse hopes for a great homeland. We congratulate the Governments of Argentina and Chile on the success of their agreements on the demarcation of their borders, and we again express our happiness at the prospects for peace in El Salvador. We very much hope that our America will once again be the continent of peace and hope.

Next year Ibero-America and friendly countries will be getting ready to commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America. It took five centuries for the countries that make up the Ibero-American community to get together in a summit conference, in the hospitable city of Guadalajara. It was the first of a series of meetings of countries with the same cultural, political and religious identities, eager to work together for a common future.

(Mr. Saguier Caballero, Paraguay)

We hope that there will be a successful outcome to the Uruguay Round negotiations. A policy of subsidies and protectionism is not compatible with a free-market economy nor with the new international economic order that is supposedly being established.

We desire equitable trade negotiations and a better price for our products, as the proper way to bring about development. Democracy and peace cannot last where man lacks the minimum conditions for a dignified life.

Nowhere is more appropriate than the General Assembly of the United Nations for invoking continent-wide solidarity, good will and peace between nations. A United Nations ready to meet the challenge of new times is mankind's best means of bringing about the promising future that we see opening up before us. If we join forces and have good will, God will help us.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.